

CIRCULAR
ON THE SUBJECT OF EDUCATION.

To all the Masonic Lodges in North Carolina.

From the accompanying Report and Resolutions adopted at our last Grand Communication, you will perceive that the Grand Master is requested to address a Circular to each of the subordinate Lodges in this State, for the purpose of impressing upon their notice the subject of a Seminary of learning to be established under the immediate control and direction of the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons of North Carolina. In obedience to this request, though poorly able to do justice to this effort of Masonic benevolence, I nevertheless will attempt to urge upon the Fraternity a hearty co-operation in the views and measures of the Grand Lodge, expressed in the very able and lucid Report which accompanies this Circular. It might appear egotistical in me to attempt further arguments than those set forth in this Report. But feeling deeply interested in the success of this enterprise, I will not shrink from the task imposed by withholding my views and opinions, which are now hastily submitted for your consideration.

I will first briefly refer to the former proceedings of the Fraternity, and the Grand Lodge in particular, in their attempt to awaken the sleeping indifference of our Order; which should have engaged their earliest efforts and prompt response. It is known to every member of the Fraternity that this subject has occupied the attention of the Grand Lodge at every Communication since 1838; and it would, therefore, be a waste of time, and a tax upon your patience, to allude to these proceedings, further than to direct your minds to their consideration. I will, however, here remark, that very little has been done, except to resolve and report upon the subject: the time has now arrived for *action—ACTION!* Let us, then, not leave to be done by others *that which is our duty to perform.*

Although the contemplated institution is to be established upon the plan of benevolence, it is not expected to debar the more fortunate and wealthy from participating in its advantages. In fact,

we should invite this union. With this design effected, we shall see the more indigent and humble, as well as those more favored by fortune, sharing equal advantages, and nobly contending for honorable distinction. It will instruct the one, as well as convince the other, that wealth, however valuable when properly used, can confer no superiority in the contest for moral and intellectual excellence.

Cast your eyes over our country. What a spectacle rises to the view of every Mason, in beholding the number of the rising generation descended from worthy members of our order, who need assistance and instruction! Doubtless, many of them possess great brilliancy of intellect, which is, and must forever be buried, without our aid, beneath the rubbish of a cold and indifferent world! Many hidden virtues, and generous and noble hearts must be forever lost to themselves, their families and the world, without the advantages which we now propose to offer to this unfortunate class of our fraternity; as, in their present condition, they can never, through their ordinary means, be developed.

I am aware there has existed, in the minds of some, an opinion, which I trust has no place in the true masonic heart, that it is not best for every man to be educated; that education creates discontent in the minds of those in the more humble sphere of life; and that they are better suited to their stations when left in a state of ignorance. But I am happy to know that under our Constitution and in our country, no privileged orders are recognized; to prove which we have only to refer to the enviable distinction which has crowned the efforts of those who have sprung from the humblest walks of life, when controlled by the power of education. It is unnecessary to make such appeals to our noble order for their co-operation; for I feel confident the most indifferent of them—I am sure every virtuous and intelligent mind, will agree that he who is blessed with a cultivated intellect, is made thereby a more worthy, useful and happy citizen. Such are the benign influences which we propose to confer upon the rising, indigent race of our beloved order. The farmer, the mechanic—in truth, men of every profession, are made more capable, more worthy, and more exalted by education—more apt to de-

wise new plans of operation, and improve upon every science partially perfected.

It is needless for me to press this branch of the subject to greater length, believing as I do that every true mason readily and heartily subscribes to the sentiments expressed, and will rejoice in the good intended to be dispensed. It therefore only remains for me to allude to the means by which we can effect our great and noble undertaking. This work has been begun; but we must not content ourselves with a beginning. Let that spirit animate our hearts which prompted the Entered Apprentice to ask for more light. We have had this light given us. Let us then press forward, nor content ourselves with the vain hope that when we have agitated this subject, we have performed our duty. Let us all liberally contribute and nobly bring our energies to the work; and we shall ere long see, to the joy of our hearts, issuing from this fountain of benevolence and truth, virtue and excellence to gladden and adorn every part of the country. Let, then, every Mason open his purse, as well as his heart, and march to this field of high and exalted action. And when this noble structure is completed, though not supported by the pillars, nor covered with gold as was Solomon's Temple, yet it will be supported by materials more substantial to the soul, if not so dazzling to the sight. Masonry can then point to one of her stars, which will shine in her crown to interest as well as to profit the human race. This institution once completed and placed in successful operation, will form a common centre, around which the hearts, the hopes and the wishes of every Mason will unite: And this effected, the good which it will confer upon all classes of the community cannot be estimated.

Masonry has then, in this, a great and important work to perform. Let us look forward to its happy results, and be cheered by the prospect which lies before us. Let it stimulate our efforts and dispel the gloom which rests upon the minds of the lukewarm of our order, who are now working members; and let us not forget to animate those of our brothers who are not attached to Lodges, to a sense of their moral responsibility. What Mason is there in North Carolina, who deserves the name of a Free and

Accepted Mason, who does not feel his heart glow with a grateful and generous impulse, however elevated his position, when he reflects that his distinction and honors are in part due to masonry? These reflections should influence such to dispense with many of their luxuries, to give this cause that support which not only philanthropy dictates, but their obligations to God and masonry demand. Many of this class of our Fraternity, who are nearly extinct in recollection, but held in remembrance by the records of Lodges, have generous hearts and liberal views; and no doubt will nobly respond to the calls of our ancient and beloved order, when they contemplate the incalculable benefits which must certainly flow from this Masonic Seminary. But if we should meet with any whose minds are so contracted, or whose hearts are so avaricious, as to oppose this scheme, we say "let them alone." If any, however, should regard this as an untried experiment, and hesitate from the fear that it *may* be abortive and fruitless, let us point them to Pennsylvania, New York, Missouri, Alabama, and other States, whose flourishing schools under the auspices of our order, will at once quiet their apprehension and silence their objections.

True masonry has already erected for herself a high and imperishable moral edifice; and we now propose to blend the whole in establishing a school to cultivate the mind for that enjoyment, whence the soul can realize its full fruition. Let me, then, in conclusion, press this great and noble undertaking upon your minds. Let every one ask himself, as a Mason, in the face of these facts, "Have I a heart so chilled with indifference, as to withhold from this cause my sanction, efforts and means?" I trust not one will find in his bosom such a feeling. Let not the virtues of the past suffice, but the glory of the future stimulate to feelings and deeds of noble and expansive charity. As masonry knows no extent in territorial limits, let us endeavor to make her as useful as extensive; trusting to the guidance of Divine Providence, whose blessings have ever attended her efforts to promote Truth and Virtue in the world.

When the action of the late Grand Lodge, to which your attention is now directed, is generally known, the subordinate lodges

throughout the State, will, I doubt not, act with a spirit of liberality and zeal, which will meet the most sanguine expectation of the friends of this measure. Hiram Lodge, in this city, has with the most praiseworthy promptness met and nobly responded to the call of the Grand Lodge. Immediately after the close of the late Annual Communication, that Lodge, though few in numbers, and limited in means, called a special meeting, and appropriated *one thousand dollars* in aid of this object; and no doubt exists that *five hundred dollars more* will be raised by individual contributions on the subscription paper now in the hands of her active Trustee, who is engaged in the duty of soliciting such donations. A similar response, according to their several ability, from all the Lodges, will place ample means for a beginning in the treasury in the course of the ensuing year.

☞ The plan for raising funds adopted by the Grand Lodge, will be found annexed to the accompanying report.

Fraternally yours.

WM. F. COLLINS, G. M.

Raleigh, Dec. 28, 1847.

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS ON A SEMINARY OF LEARNING.

*Adopted by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina at its session
in December, 1847.*

The Committee on so much of the annual address of the M. W. Grand Master, as relates to a Seminary of Learning, regret that they have had but little time to devote to the consideration of this most important and interesting subject. Their labors, however, have been greatly assisted, and the necessity for any attempt to impress its weight upon the understandings and feelings of the Fraternity, entirely superseded by the able and judicious remarks of the M. W. Grand Master, and the eloquent and soul-stirring report of the Trustees on the part of the Grand Lodge. For all that need be said to stimulate the Craft to a prompt, liberal and zealous discharge of their duty in rearing the contemplated monu-

ment of masonic Benevolence, they therefore refer to these lucid and animating documents.

As to the progress of this noble enterprise, your committee are pained to observe how slowly it advances. There is a tardiness even among its warmest supporters which is much to be lamented. Public sentiment—the voice of the Fraternity in every part of the State—is strongly in favor of the institution, as has been sufficiently attested by the repeated, deliberate and almost unanimous resolves of this body; and yet, after the adoption of a definite and easy plan of operations for raising the necessary funds by voluntary contributions, and the lapse of nearly twelve months since its publication, your committee are mortified to find, from the report of the Trustees, that but four of the subordinate Lodges have, in accordance with a provision of that plan, reported to this body the appointment of Trustees; that only three—Wake Forest, Concord (Tarborough,) and St. John's (Wilmington)—have made appropriations to the object; and but a very small amount of money has yet come into the hands of the Treasurer. But your committee would by no means discourage themselves or others, by attributing this delinquency, and consequent small beginning, to either the want of *will* or *ability* in any of the Lodges. They can readily find a more favorable, though they must confess somewhat blameable, reason, in the disposition which is unfortunately peculiar to associated bodies—to *procrastinate* the most important duties. They *know* the default of some of the Lodges in this instance, is attributable to this. *They intend* to respond, and to respond nobly to the call; but by delay, this Grand Communication has come and found them unprepared—with but half their labor executed, and with feelings of regret, which, it is hoped, will teach them the importance of *promptness* in future. Nor is it doubted, that for *this reason only*, those Lodges, (or a decided majority of them,) from whom nothing has been heard on the subject, have neglected to appoint each its Trustee, make its appropriation, take up its individual subscriptions, and send its Trustee, with the proper returns, to this Communication.

It was expected and greatly desired, that the *first annual meeting of the Trustees*, as required by the plan of operations adopt-

ed at the last session of the Grand Lodge, would have been held at the present session. Had each subordinate Lodge sent up its Trustee, with the first instalment on the subscriptions, an aggregate sum would have been thrown together, and an impulse would have been given to the cause, highly encouraging to its friends, and leading to speedy and certain success.

But it is vain and useless to dwell upon the omissions and errors of the past. Our consolation is in the opportunities which are still afforded us for amendment and reparation. Lost time, 'tis true, can never be recalled; but what is lost in means may be repaired by the redoubled zeal and energy of our efforts, and the increased liberality of our sacrifices and offerings.

To ensure such action and such results, on the part of ALL the Lodges under your jurisdiction, your committee believe all that is at present necessary, is the adoption of the subjoined resolutions.

No specific plan, as to the character of the contemplated school can be adopted with propriety, until something more definite is ascertained with regard to the probable amount of funds that may be raised, and the contributing Lodges can equally and fairly participate in the decision which shall form and fix its character. Nor would it be proper to decide at what point the institution shall be located, until it shall be seen what place will hold out the strongest inducements to the successful and useful operation of the institution. The one must be determined by the means; and the other by the liberal offers, eligibility, &c, of particular localities.

RESOLUTIONS RELATIVE TO A SEMINARY OF LEARNING.

1. *Resolved.* (in the language of a former report,) "That the simple proposition is, to raise by subscription, a fund sufficient to establish a Seminary of Learning, under the direction of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, in which may be educated, free from charge, such poor and destitute orphans, and children of living brother masons, who have not the means to confer this benefit on their offspring, as may be selected for the purpose, from among those who reside within the territorial limits of the respective Lodges throughout the State," upon a fair and equitable plan of admission, to be hereafter determined by the Grand Lodge.

2. *Resolved,* That so soon as fifteen thousand dollars shall have been received and invested, the contemplated school shall go into operation upon a plan suited to the amount of means afforded by the interest thereon; and that all incipient steps shall be ta-

ken with the view of ultimately making said institution capable of conferring upon youth the highest and most thorough collegiate courses.

3. *Resolved*, That in this good work the hand of this Grand Lodge has been set to the plough, and we can never look back; that, in the language of our worthy and energetic Grand Master, 'the Lodge will not give up the struggle, nor waver in her purpose, but will steadily and firmly adhere to the excellent system already matured in furtherance of this important measure:' That the appropriations and subscriptions already made, tho' small compared with the sum required, constitute a guarantee that the work will now certainly be pushed forward to its consummation.

4. *Resolved*, That the subordinate Lodges throughout the State are requested to carry out the plan adopted for raising funds at the last annual Communication of this Grand Lodge, with a spirit and zeal worthy of the cause and of themselves as Masons; which plan will be found in the printed Proceedings of 1846, pages 32-3 and 45-6; and that they commence the work as early as practicable in the beginning of the coming new year, and not relax their efforts until the time arrives to make report thereof to the next session of this Grand Lodge.

5. *Resolved*, That offers of land or land and houses to secure the location of the institution, will be received, at any time in the recess, by the M. W. Grand Master, and be by him laid before the next Grand Lodge, and also during the first four days of its sitting, to be by that body considered and acted on: provided, that no amendment to any offer shall be allowed after the opening of the same before the Lodge.

6. *Resolved*, That the M. W. Grand Master be requested to cause the plan referred to be printed in circular form, with this report and these resolutions, and transmit the same, with such remarks as he may deem proper to insure prompt and efficient action on the subject throughout this jurisdiction before the next annual meeting of the Grand Lodge, to the Master of each subordinate Lodge in the State.

[*Adopted by the Grand Lodge of N. C. Dec. 9, 1847.*]

WM. TH. BAIN, *Gr. Secretary.*

PLAN FOR RAISING SCHOOL FUND.

1. That there be a board of Trustees immediately constituted, for the School, consisting of three to be appointed by the Grand Lodge, and one to be appointed by each subordinate Lodge, under its jurisdiction, who shall hold an annual meeting at the time and place of the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge.

2. That the subordinate Lodges be authorised and directed, at the earliest day practicable, to meet and appoint their trustees, respectively, by the selection of one member for that purpose, from each of their own bodies.

3. That it shall be the duty of the three Trustees appointed by the Grand Lodge to discharge any duties required of them by the Grand Lodge, or the Board of Trustees, as an Executive School Committee.

4. That the Trustee of each subordinate Lodge shall, under the direction of his Lodge, and in such manner as the Lodge may prescribe, proceed immediately to secure from the members of his Lodge, or any other individuals disposed to contribute, such voluntary subscriptions as they may be disposed to make for the purpose of establishing the school; that he shall report the amount of subscriptions to the Lodge, and the cash collected thereon, which shall, whenever it amounts to ten dollars, be forthwith transmitted to the Grand Treasurer at Raleigh.

5. That the subscriptions be made payable as follows:—One fifth cash, and the remainder in four equal annual instalments; and that notes be taken upon them, conforming thereto, made payable to the Trustees of the Charity School fund of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina; and that they be kept by the Trustee of each Lodge aforesaid; and collected, when due, and reported to the Lodge as above, or, if not collected, handed over to his successor, or such person as may be hereafter designated.

6. That each subordinate Lodge be requested to subscribe, at their discretion, such amounts as they may deem it prudent or proper to spare from the fund of the Lodge for this purpose—to be forwarded, or such amount thereof as they may think proper then to pay, to the Grand Treasurer, at the next Annual Communication; and the remainder, if any, in similar annual instalments.

7. That the Grand Lodge make such annual appropriation to

this object as her funds and the other demands upon her resources, will allow.

8. That the Executive Committee, of whom the Grand Treasurer shall be one, shall put the monies as fast as received, if practicable, in some safe and profitable investment, from which 6 per cent. interest will be realized.

9. The Trustees or Executive Committee shall be authorised also to receive any donations that may be made by charitable individuals other than regular subscriptions, and cause them to be likewise invested, by the same Committee, with the other monies, in Bank Stock, in notes of individuals, on mortgage of real estate and personal security, or in State Bonds.

10. That the Grand Lecturer be required to explain this subject to every Lodge he may visit, and urge upon them the necessity of liberal contributions on the part of the Lodges and of individual members, in order that the benevolent designs of the Grand Lodge may be speedily and successfully accomplished.

That each subordinate Lodge in the State be required to contribute according to her ability, and to take such steps and adopt such regulations as may be necessary to fulfil the duties imposed upon them respectively.



